

**§ 5.236 Procedures for termination, denial, suspension, or reduction of assistance based on information obtained from a SWICA or Federal agency.**

(a) *Termination, denial, suspension, or reduction of assistance.* The provisions of 42 U.S.C. 3544(c)(2)(B) and (C) shall govern the termination, denial, suspension, or reduction of benefits for an assistance applicant or participant based on income information obtained from a SWICA or a Federal agency. Procedures necessary to comply with these provisions are provided in paragraph (b) of this section.

(b) *Procedures for independent verification.* (1) Any determination or redetermination of family income made on the basis of information verified in accordance with paragraph (b) of this section shall be carried out in accordance with the requirements and procedures applicable to the individual covered program. Independent verification of information obtained from a SWICA or a Federal agency may be:

(i) By HUD; and

(ii) By a HA, when the benefit to be provided to the assistance applicant or participant is under a program in parts 880, 882, 886, 887, 891, 904, 950, or 960 of this title, including when the HA is the contract administrator for the owner.

(2) Upon receiving income information from a SWICA or a Federal agency, HUD or, when applicable, the HA shall compare the information with the information about a family's income that was:

(i) Provided by the assistance applicant or participant to the HA; or

(ii) Obtained by the owner (or mortgagee, as applicable) from the assistance applicant or participant or from his or her employer.

(3) When the income information reveals an employer or other income source that was not disclosed by the assistance applicant or participant, or when the income information differs substantially from the information received from the assistance applicant or participant or from his or her employer:

(i) HUD or, as applicable or directed by HUD, the HA shall request the undisclosed employer or other income

source to furnish any information necessary to establish an assistance applicant's or participant's eligibility for or level of assistance in a covered program. This information shall be furnished in writing, as directed to:

(A) HUD, with respect to programs under parts 215, 221, 235, 236, or 290 of this title;

(B) The HA, with respect to programs under parts 880, 882, 886, 887, 891, 904, 950, or 960 of this title for which the HA is responsible for determining eligibility or level of benefits; or

(C) The owner (or mortgagee, as applicable), with respect to programs under parts 215, 221, 235, 236, or 290 of this title, or when the owner is responsible under parts 880, 882, 886, 887, 891, 904, 950, or 960 of this title for determining eligibility or the level of assistance; or

(ii) HUD or the HA may verify the income information directly with an assistance applicant or participant. Such verification procedures shall not include any disclosure of income information prohibited under paragraph (b)(6) of this section.

(4) HUD and the HA shall not be required to pursue these verification procedures when the sums of money at issue are too small to raise an inference of fraud or justify the expense of independent verification and the procedures related to termination, denial, suspension, or reduction of assistance.

(5) Based on the income information received from a SWICA or Federal agency, HUD or the HA, as appropriate, may inform an owner (or mortgagee) that an assistance applicant's or participant's eligibility for or level of assistance is uncertain and needs to be verified. The owner (or mortgagee) shall then confirm the assistance applicant's or participant's income information by checking the accuracy of the information with the employer or other income source, or directly with the family.

(6) Nondisclosure of Income information. Neither HUD nor the HA may disclose income information obtained from a SWICA directly to an owner (unless a HA is the owner). Disclosure of income information obtained from the SSA or IRS is restricted under 26 U.S.C. § 6103(l)(7) and 42 U.S.C. 3544.

(c) *Opportunity to contest.* HUD, the HA, or the owner (or mortgagee, as applicable) shall promptly notify any assistance applicant or participant in writing of any adverse findings made on the basis of the information verified in accordance with paragraph (b) of this section. The assistance applicant or participant may contest the findings in the same manner as applies to other information and findings relating to eligibility factors under the applicable program. Termination, denial, suspension, or reduction of assistance shall be carried out in accordance with requirements and procedures applicable to the individual covered program, and shall not occur until the expiration of any notice period provided by the statute or regulations governing the program.

**§ 5.238 Criminal and civil penalties.**

Persons who violate the provisions of 42 U.S.C. 3544 or 26 U.S.C. 6103(l)(7) with respect to the use and disclosure of income information may be subject to civil or criminal penalties under 42 U.S.C. 3544(c)(3), 26 U.S.C. 7213(a), or 18 U.S.C. 1905.

**Subpart C—Pet Ownership for the Elderly or Persons With Disabilities**

AUTHORITY: 42 U.S.C. 1701r-1 and 3535(d).

**GENERAL REQUIREMENTS**

**§ 5.300 Purpose.**

(a) This subpart implements section 227 of the Housing and Urban-Rural Recovery Act of 1983 (12 U.S.C. 1701r-1) as it pertains to projects for the elderly or persons with disabilities under:

(1) The housing programs administered by the Assistant Secretary for Housing-Federal Housing Commissioner;

(2) Projects assisted under the programs contained in chapter VIII of this title 24; and

(3) The public housing programs administered by the Assistant Secretary for Public and Indian Housing under title I of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437, *et seq.*). This part does not apply to Indian housing administered under title II of that Act.

(b) [Reserved]

**§ 5.303 Exclusion for animals that assist persons with disabilities.**

(a) This subpart C does not apply to animals that are used to assist persons with disabilities. Project owners and PHAs may not apply or enforce any pet rules developed under this subpart against individuals with animals that are used to assist persons with disabilities. This exclusion applies to animals that reside in projects for the elderly or persons with disabilities, as well as to animals that visit these projects.

(1) A project owner may require resident animals to qualify for this exclusion. Project owners must grant this exclusion if:

(i) The tenant or prospective tenant certifies in writing that the tenant or a member of his or her family is a person with a disability;

(ii) The animal has been trained to assist persons with that specific disability; and

(iii) The animal actually assists the person with a disability.

(2) [Reserved]

(b) Nothing in this subpart C:

(1) Limits or impairs the rights of persons with disabilities;

(2) Authorizes project owners or PHAs to limit or impair the rights of persons with disabilities; or

(3) Affects any authority that project owners or PHAs may have to regulate animals that assist persons with disabilities, under Federal, State, or local law.

**§ 5.306 Definitions.**

*Common household pet* means:

(1) *For purposes of Housing programs:* A domesticated animal, such as a dog, cat, bird, rodent (including a rabbit), fish, or turtle, that is traditionally kept in the home for pleasure rather than for commercial purposes. Common household pet does not include reptiles (except turtles). If this definition conflicts with any applicable State or local law or regulation defining the pets that may be owned or kept in dwelling accommodations, the State or local law or regulation shall apply. This definition shall not include animals that are used to assist persons with disabilities.